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# Future Trends

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**Welcome to this week's Future Trends** - the must-read weekly briefing covering the changing face of global politics, economics, development, and conflict.

## Here's what you need to know this week:

- Donald Tusk elected as Polish prime minister
- Philippines, China trade blame for collision in disputed South China Sea
- EU to break from dependence on UK financial systems
- Antimicrobial-resistant bacterial infections spreading in Ukraine
- WHO declares loneliness a 'global public health concern'
- Moody's upgrades outlook on Nigeria to positive

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## POLITICS

**Greece and Turkey agree to mend ties.** Greece and Turkey agreed to [establish a new era of closer ties](#) between the two NATO allies but historical foes. They will seek military confidence-building measures and work on issues which have kept them apart, notably in the Aegean Sea.

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**Russian plans for elections on occupied territory.** Russia's upper house [set the country's presidential election](#) for next March, and chairwoman Valentina Matviyenko said residents in four occupied Ukrainian regions would be able to vote for the first time.

**Chad and Mauritania acknowledge dissolution of G5 Sahel Alliance amidst exiting members.** Chad and Mauritania, leaders of West Africa's G5 Sahel alliance, [confirmed the dissolution of the anti-jihadist grouping](#), after the departure of Burkina Faso and Niger.

**Sierra Leone ex-president Koroma summoned for questioning over failed coup.** The government said the failed coup was led 'mostly' by the former president's bodyguards. [Koroma condemned the attacks](#), over which 71 people have been arrested, including 45 serving military officers.

**Taliban says China has accepted its envoy to Beijing.** Afghanistan's Taliban government says Beijing has [officially accepted its ambassador to China](#), making it the first country to recognise an envoy from Kabul since the Islamist group seized power in 2021.

**Italy tells China it will exit the Belt and Road Investment Pact.** This [deals a fresh blow to Beijing's ambition](#) to expand the massive investment program. Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said the pact had not “produced the desired effects” and was no longer “a priority”.

**Donald Tusk elected as Polish prime minister.** The Polish parliament has given former moderate prime minister Donald Tusk a [mandate to form a new coalition government](#). It will put an end to the eight-year rule of the right-wing nationalist Law and Justice (PiS) party, which repeatedly clashed with EU authorities.

## CONFLICT

**Philippines, China trade blame for collision in disputed South China Sea.** The incident happened [during a Philippine resupply mission](#) to a tiny

garrison on Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands, which is a flashpoint for Manila and Beijing.

**The Philippines has also expressed concerns** that China will [build a military base on Whitsun Reef](#), which is within the Philippine Exclusive Economic Zone.

**Yemen's Houthis warn they will target all ships headed to Israel.** Yemen's Houthi movement said they would [target all ships heading to Israel](#), regardless of their nationality, and warned all international shipping companies against dealing with Israeli ports.

**Armenia and Azerbaijan work toward a peace treaty.** In the aftermath of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Armenia and Azerbaijan have [agreed to exchange prisoners of war](#) and work toward signing a peace treaty in what the EU hailed as a major step toward peace in the long-troubled region.

**Myanmar's army grants amnesty to troops jailed for being AWOL.** Myanmar's military government has been [freeing soldiers and police](#) who had been jailed for desertion and absence without leave, wanting them to return to active duty to ease an apparent manpower shortage.

## ECONOMICS

**EU to break from dependence on UK financial systems.** EU governments [signed off on controversial plans](#) to cut dependence on UK clearing houses post Brexit. A draft law agreed by the EU's Council warns of the risk of excessive exposures to major clearing houses outside the bloc.

**Key provisions of the US Congress' massive defence bill.** The \$886 billion bill, which is a 3% increase from last year, includes 5.2% pay rise, prohibition on Chinese batteries, strengthening relations with Taiwan, extending domestic surveillance and a [Nuclear Security Fund for domestic uranium](#) production.

**Moody's upgrades outlook on Nigeria to positive.** Ratings agency Moody's [revised its outlook on Nigeria to positive](#) from stable, citing possible

reversal of the deterioration in the country's fiscal and external position due to authorities' reform efforts.

**Ethiopia edges towards default as bondholder talks falter.** Ethiopia appeared to be on the [brink of a debt default](#) after talks with key holders of the African country's \$1 billion international bond ended without agreement. The government failed to pay \$33m interest payment on the Eurobond.

**Nuclear's share of world power output at multi-decade low.** Nuclear energy [dropped by 4% and now accounts for 9.2%](#) of total gross electricity generation, according to the annual World Nuclear Industry Status Report. The most nuclear power in the world is generated in the US, followed by China.

## DEVELOPMENT

**EU reaches deal on world's first rules for artificial intelligence.** Under the deal, the [most advanced foundation models](#) that pose the biggest "systemic risks" will get extra scrutiny, including requirements to disclose more detail such as how much computing power was used to train the systems.

**Russia Insists on an Expanded Boundary in the Arctic Ocean.** Russia has [reiterated its ambition for an extended continental shelf](#) in the Arctic Ocean. During the 13th international Arctic Forum held in St. Petersburg, Russian Navy chief Admiral Yevmenov said the Arctic was crucial to Russia's national security interests.

**China starts up world's first fourth-generation nuclear reactor.** Commercial operations started at a new, first-of-its-kind nuclear reactor. Compared with previous reactors, the fourth generation Shidaowan plant is [designed to use fuel more efficiently](#) and improve its economics, safety and environmental footprint.

**Electric plane to deliver mail across New Zealand in decarbonisation push.** The ALIA aircraft was [designed by US aero firm Beta Technologies](#). Air

New Zealand also hopes it will be running zero-emissions electric passenger flights by 2030.

**Antimicrobial-resistant bacterial infections spreading in Ukraine.** High rates of antimicrobial resistance before Russia's invasion, along with a rise in traumatic wounds and overwhelmed health care systems, has led to [increased multi-drug resistant infections](#) in Ukraine and surrounding countries, according to a new [report](#).

**Canada to offer incentives to cattle farms to reduce methane emissions.** The new draft protocol will [incentivise beef cattle farmers to implement changes](#) that would cut methane emissions from burping cows, with an opportunity to generate offset credits that they can sell.

## SOCIAL

**Pliosaur discovery: Huge sea monster emerges from Dorset, UK cliffs.** The 2m-long fossil of the ferocious marine reptile, that lived in oceans about 150 million years ago, is one of the most [complete specimens of its type ever discovered](#), giving new insights into this ancient predator.

**Denmark passes law to ban Koran burnings.** Denmark's parliament [passed a law making it illegal](#) to burn the Koran in public places, seeking to deescalate tensions with Muslim countries after a spate of Danish protests during which Islam's holy book was burned.

**South Korean city turns to matchmaking to boost low birth rates.** South Korea's [fertility rate dropped to a record low of 0.78 last year](#) with the country having the world's lowest number of expected children for each woman. Commentators put it down to the high costs of education and housing.

**Mandela's former home abandoned and in disrepair.** A decade after his death, South Africans have expressed heartbreak and [called on government and family to undertake repairs](#) to Mandela's home. It was most recently

occupied by some of his grandchildren, but electricity was cut after they refused to pay the bills.

**WHO declares loneliness a 'global public health concern'.** WHO has [declared loneliness to be a pressing global health threat](#), with the US surgeon general saying that 'its mortality effects are equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day'.

## PEACEBUILDING

**Native American tribes are promoting "[food sovereignty](#)" for tribal members to reclaim aspects of Native American food and culture and provide healthy food for families.** Restoring bison to reservations, developing community food gardens with ancestral seeds, understanding and collecting wild fruits and vegetables, and learning how to cook meals with traditional ingredients are all part of the movement. In Montana, for example, all Native American reservations now have community gardens and buffalo herds.

The [University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute](#) was invited to brief the UN Security Council on Kroc's [Peace Accords Matrix program](#). The program hosts the largest existing collection of implementation data on intrastate peace agreements, and PAM team members regularly provide research support to ongoing peace processes on issues of peace agreement design and implementation.

**Some doctors and medical schools are preparing to address likely health impacts if temperatures continue to climb.** Since 2019, the number of US medical schools requiring coursework on the effects of climate change on health has more than doubled, [according to PBS](#). The [University of Colorado School of Medicine](#) offers a diploma in climate medicine. The [Texas A&M Engineering and Extension Service](#) provides training at a mock "Disaster City." In an effort to determine local climate risks, the [CrisisReady initiative at Harvard](#) has given some workers in India small wearable temperature sensors to measure microclimates more accurately.

Some organizations have recently published guides for countering hate. Western States Center and the [Bridging Divides Initiative](#) have released a new tool, [Speaking Out Against Bigoted, Dehumanizing Rhetoric: What We](#)

[Can Do](#). The new guide documents the surge in antisemitic and Islamophobic hate incidents, explains the link between rhetoric and violence, and provides suggestions and resources to take action. [Equality Labs](#) has published an [Anti-Doxxing Guide for Activists Facing Attacks](#). [Political Research Associates](#) has disseminated an [Advisory: 'No Nazis on Our Streets'](#), which offers advice about how to prevent white nationalists from infiltrating protests in an effort to incite violence.